

PLEASE ENTER 3/2/06

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

27. (currently amended) A singles stick for holding the top edge of a tennis net at its regulation height above the ground for singles play, which comprises:

(a) a base comprising a single, rigid, fixed length piece having a bottom for engaging the ground and an upper end spaced above the ground when the bottom of the base engages the ground;

(b) a staff slidably connected to the base such that the base and staff can be pulled apart or pushed together between collapsed and extended positions thereof by sliding the base and staff relative to one another, wherein the staff comprises a single, rigid, fixed length piece having a bottom and a top, wherein the bottom of the staff is adjacent the upper end of the base when the base and staff are disposed in the extended position thereof, and wherein the base and staff are the only two pieces that slide relative to one another to vary the length of the singles stick;

(c) a ~~fixed depth~~ notch on the top of the staff with the notch having an upwardly facing bottom, wherein a top support cord or cable of a tennis net can be placed within the notch and when so placed the top support cord or cable rests against and is retained against vertical movement by the bottom of the notch;

(d) a lock which releasably secures the base and staff against sliding movement relative to one another when the lock is engaged, wherein the lock is configured to hold the base and staff in ~~only a single~~, a predetermined, extended

and locked position by acting between a location on the staff which is adjacent to the bottom of the staff and a location on the upper end of the base after the staff has been slid relatively to the base to raise the bottom of the staff to a position adjacent the upper end of the base; and

(e) wherein the combined length of the base and staff in the ~~single~~, predetermined, extended and locked position of the base and staff is selected to hold the top edge of the tennis net above the ground by an amount required to conform the tennis net for regulation singles play when the singles stick is installed at a predetermined court location between a singles line and doubles line on one side of a tennis court, wherein a user can quickly and easily conform one side of the tennis net for regulation singles play without measurement by pulling the base and staff of the singles stick apart, by locking the base and staff of the singles stick together in the ~~single~~, predetermined, extended and locked position that is provided therefor, and by then wedging the singles stick between the top support cord or cable and the ground at the predetermined court location, the singles stick when so wedged having the top cord or cable of the tennis net resting against the bottom of the notch on the staff with the bottom of the base resting against the ground.

28. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the base and staff are telescopically connected to one another.

29. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 28, wherein the base and staff have mating non-circular cross-sectional configurations.

30. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the bottom of the base comprises an enlarged foot for abutting against the ground.

31. (currently amended) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the lock is further configured to hold the base and staff in ~~only a single~~, a predetermined, collapsed and locked position.

32. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the lock comprises a locking pin insertable in a hole when the lock is engaged.

33. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 32, wherein the pin is spring biased in a direction tending to insert the pin in the hole when the pin is aligned with the hole.

34. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the lock is biased towards automatic engagement of the lock.

35. (previously presented) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the base has an elongated tubular shape without any ground engaging, vertically extending support legs being carried on the base.

36. (new) The singles stick of claim 27, wherein the combined length of the base and staff in the collapsed position thereof is substantially as long as a tennis racket to allow the singles stick formed by the base and staff in the collapsed position thereof to be short enough to be laid lengthwise in an equipment bag that is sized to carry a

tennis racket that is also laid lengthwise within the equipment bag but with the singles stick remaining long enough when the base and staff are in the collapsed position to be easily visible and locatable within the equipment bag.